

## **THE 2007 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AGENDA**

### *20 Steps in 12 Months of the New Administration*

During the average year, more people are killed simply trying to cross the street than in homicides in Montgomery County. Nearly five years ago, the final report of the Montgomery County Blue Ribbon Panel on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety called on the county to take a series of inter-related education, enforcement, engineering and legislative steps to dramatically reduce pedestrian injuries and to encourage more people to walk.

It is the consensus of the Montgomery County Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) that a wholesale commitment to pedestrian safety is essential. The Blue Ribbon Panel on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety and the PSAC have worked tirelessly on these issues for years, but far too few identifiable changes have been made that would enable Montgomery County to claim to be the kind of pedestrian-friendly community desired by the increasing number of people who live and work here..

Rising public concerns about automobile-oriented overdevelopment and about the health of our environment in general have crystallized the need to focus more resources on creating livable and sustainable communities. Pedestrian safety and walkability is a cornerstone measure of the health and vibrancy of a truly All-American environmentally-sensitive community. It is not only a matter of life and death – it is about the quality of our lives.

We believe that a series of definite, concrete steps must be taken expeditiously, and that time deadlines to achieve these steps must be set and adhered to. To that end, we have developed this series of action items to improve pedestrian safety by December 31, 2007. Each of these recommendations is derived from the Blue Ribbon Panel's original recommendations, many of which remain unfulfilled five years after they were proposed.

### Management

1. Establish the Montgomery County Office of Pedestrian Safety, with no less than two full-time employees, reporting directly to the Chief Administrative Officer. The primary purpose is to oversee the daily progress of implementing the final recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety and to resolve other related issues that arise. This action should be taken by March 31, 2007.
2. Remove the sunset provision of the Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee so that this broadly based panel of independent experts and concerned citizens can continue to help the county oversee the implementation of the Blue Ribbon Panel's final report recommendations. This action should be taken before June 1, 2007.

3. Assign at least one high-level employee within the Department of Public Works and Transportation to work full-time on pedestrian safety issues. This action should be taken by March 31, 2007.
4. Provide one additional full-time position within the Department of Police to analyze crash data which will be used by the county and state to identify and implement specific education, enforcement and engineering strategies to prevent pedestrian injuries at those locations in the future. This action should be taken by March 31, 2007
5. Hire additional inspectors within the Department of Permitting Services dedicated to pedestrian safety and accessibility. This action should be taken by March 31, 2007.

### Enforcement

6. Fund, plan and implement a law enforcement program to stop both jaywalking and drivers not yielding to pedestrians. The program must have a substantial and well-funded public education component and should be repeated monthly. A regular program of pedestrian enforcement should be in place by April, 2007.
7. Fund, plan and implement an expanded ongoing enforcement program to curb aggressive driving, including red-light running and excessive speeding. This program also must be supported by well-funded public education efforts. A regular program should be implemented by April, 2007.

### Education

8. Fully fund a comprehensive, ongoing and highly-visible public education / social marketing campaign that is conducted in coordination with law enforcement activities in order to change attitudes and behaviors of both motorists and pedestrians. Target date for launching campaign: June 2007.
9. Implement a pedestrian safety curriculum as a mandatory unit in school health classes in grades K through 8. To be implemented at the initiation of the 2007-2008 school year.
10. Work with the state of Maryland to expand a pedestrian safety segment in all driver education and improvement classes. To be completed by July, 2007.
11. Incorporate pedestrian safety segments in *all* ESOL classes. Guidance should be provided to ESOL providers on the integration of the materials by September, 2007.
12. All elementary schools in the Montgomery County Public School system should participate in the annual Walk to School Day program to teach children skills to walk safely, to promote the health benefits of walking, to raise awareness of how walkable a community is and where improvements can be made, to raise concern for the environment, and to reduce traffic congestion, pollution, and speed near schools. The next Walk to School Day is scheduled for October 3, 2007.

## Engineering

13. The Montgomery County Park and Planning Commission, in cooperation with the Executive Branch, will conduct a thorough analysis of the county's transportation network in order to identify pedestrian safety and mobility problems and to develop a comprehensive action plan to use innovative engineering design to transform the county into a pedestrian-friendly community. The final report of this analysis should be issued by December 31, 2007, with periodic preliminary reports issued during 2007 on a quarterly basis.
14. Invest more resources into pedestrian facilities until the pedestrian infrastructure catches up with the current automobile-oriented growth across the county, beginning with the next budget to be approved in early 2007.
15. Update and revamp the Community Road Code, the Annual Growth Policy, the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance, the Local Area Transportation Review, and the Policy Area Transportation Review, by institutionalizing the principles of pedestrian-friendly and walkable communities and by embracing the engineering recommendations issued in the Blue Ribbon Panel's final report in order to maximize pedestrian safety and accessibility.
16. Conduct and complete a thorough review of pedestrian crossing times in all high-traffic areas of the county, not just those that request one. Respond to these findings with appropriate changes. To be completed by October, 2007.
17. Conduct an audit of street and sidewalk lighting on all major roads, highways, and arterials, regardless of whether DPWT is itself responsible for the lighting. Respond to these findings with appropriate action. Empower DPWT to immediately resolve disputes with SHA or PEPCO that lead to lighting-related safety problems. To be completed by October 31, 2007.
18. Fulfill the mandate of the Safe Routes to Schools program by ensuring that every student in Montgomery County has a safe – and practical – walkway to and from school. Ongoing activities should be stepped up and a plan for improving conditions countywide should be in place by December, 2007.
19. Update the county roadway design manuals to stress the requirement for providing pedestrian and bicycle accommodation and provide design guidance for varying conditions typical of Montgomery County. To be completed by December, 2007.
20. Complete the improvements recommended in the county's Bus Stop Safety Study to ensure the safety of transit patrons walking to and from bus stops and to maximize the benefits of our investment in transit. These improvements should be completed by December, 2007.